

**TOWN OF WALPOLE
STAFF MEETING
MAY 17, 2018**

Selectboard Present: Peggy Pschirrer (Chair); Steven Dalessio; Cheryl Mayberry

Staff Present: Sarah Downing (Manager of Administration); Michael Rau (Highway Department), Police Chief Michael Paquette (Police Department); Lt. Justin Sanctuary (Police Department); Sandra Smith (Town Clerk/Tax Collector); Rebecca Whippie (Hooper Institute); Justine Fafara (Library Director); Paul Colburn (Recycling Center); Richard Kreissle (Manager of Finance)

Staff Absent: Justin Cassarino (Recreation Department)

CALL TO ORDER: Mrs. Pschirrer called this Staff Meeting to order at 5:00 PM in the Walpole Town Hall. She advised this meeting is being recorded.

Mrs. Pschirrer advised there will be a slightly different agenda for this meeting. She thanked everyone who submitted their monthly reports in writing. The Selectboard wants to talk about changes to these Staff Meetings which have been going on for about two years. These meetings have been invaluable. Mrs. Downing distributed two recent changes to the Personnel Manual, Vacation Time and Compensation Time. They were brought up a while ago, the Selectboard considered and voted to approve them.

Compensation Time is a liability for the Town. Many employees are entitled to it but the Selectboard needs to control their liability. Therefore, they have re-written this policy. Nothing will be taken away from employees but they are being asked that it is used in a more timely fashion. If employees decide to resign or retire the Town must pay them for Compensation Time. The first paragraph is the same as it has always been. The second paragraph needs to be called to their attention. Starting January 2019, the Town's eligible employees will accrue comp time up to 100 hours. As soon as they reach this cap, no additional comp time may be accrued until the employee uses his/her comp time such that it falls below the 100-hour cap. When an employee is not eligible to receive comp time because she/he has accrued the maximum amount of time allowed he/she will be paid cash overtime for any/all overtime hours worked. An employee must be permitted to use comp time on the date requested unless doing so would unduly disrupt the operation of the department. The Police Department is allowed to accumulate up to 480 hours of comp time; that is a huge liability to the Town. When that person decides to leave/retire, the Town has to come up with all that money. It is not necessarily in the budget. Other eligible employees are allowed to accumulate 240 hours of comp time. Employees are still able to do this but the Selectboard is setting a limit which they can do legally. This cannot be a savings account. Relative to the last paragraph, last sentence; the Department Heads will make the decision about an employee using comp time on a certain date so it will not disrupt the operation of the department.

Mrs. Pschirrer encouraged employees to take this home and read it again. It will be discussed again at another meeting.

Mrs. Pschirrer advised they have also been talking about **Vacation Time**. Some people have misinterpreted the existing language that was printed. The Selectboard has tried to make this clearer. Employees will accumulate vacation time 3.33 hours per month. An accounting system will need to be set up to deal with this. Everything in this section is pretty much the same except employees will earn it a month at a time. On January 1st, 2019 employees annual accrual shall begin on January 1st and each employee's accrual rate shall be based on the number of years of service that employee would obtain as of their next anniversary date. Employees will not lose what they have. Mr. Rau expressed concern as the

Highway Department employees usually cannot take vacation time during the summer. Mrs. Pschirrer replied they will not lose any of their time. Someone taking four weeks at one time is rare but two weeks at a time has been granted. Accurate records will have to be kept. We will have to work together in January 2019 as there will be challenges. Many people in some departments have accumulated a great deal of vacation time. The Selectboard wants employees to take vacation time as it is healthy. Vacation time will have to be requested so it can be recorded. This will be discussed again as it gets closer to the end of the year.

The Selectboard feels these Staff Meetings have been very productive. They have learned a great deal about what every department is doing. Also each department is kept informed of what other departments are doing. Mrs. Pschirrer noted it is about time to evaluate these meetings and whether they should change or remain the same. It makes us a better team. She asked what would be best for the Department Supervisors and what would they like to see at these meetings.

Mrs. Downing suggested meeting every other month rather than every month. Mrs. Pschirrer asked two people to not just read their report but tell us about something they are doing in their department that is different.

Highway Department: Mr. Mike Rau is going to talk about some of his experiences. For example: the Alstead Center Road. This culvert replacement project started about a year ago this summer. Step by step they met with an engineering company onsite. They went to permitting and everything looked great until they got a new DES representative. The Cold River is within a quarter mile of the culvert. There is a three-page document from DES outlining what they wanted them to do in addition to what had already completed. They are now close to \$8,000 just for engineering. DES made the project more complicated than just replacing the culvert. They now want the Town to do a “Fish Ladder”; Mr. Rau explained how the fish would move down the stream. Fish and Game said there are three kinds of fish there. They tried to negotiate an alternative option with DES. It would be to place a “Fish Ladder” in the Houghton Brook near Blackjack Crossing. DES was okay with this but then said if they are going to do this, it all has to be done at the same time. DES is now recommending they do the “Fish Ladders” in both places. Mrs. Pschirrer advised this will delay this major project. This project will be funded with the extra Highway money the Town received about a year ago. If the project is not done, the road will probably collapse. It will be better if they could get the approval from the DES rather than do the project under an emergency permit. Just the culvert alone is \$10,000. A lot of other details need to be done to get this project done. An access road will be needed. The landowners need to be on-board with this. In summary; they will go back-and-forth with DES for a period of time. If the project is denied, they will have to start the project all over again. The road may have to be closed.

Finance Department: Mr. Rich Kreissle spoke about the RSAs and the auditing process. An Income Statement is always changing. Usually the auditors spend about 3-to-4 days here because the work is very intense. Occasionally they ask for information from previous years. They look for purchase orders, invoices, account numbers, etc. to be sure they were approved by the Selectboard. The auditors meet with the Town Treasurer, Library, Town Clerk and other employees if there are questions. It gives Mr. Kreissle a chance to speak with fellow accountants. They talk about internal controls, changes with the NH Retirement System and other issues. The previous auditors never mentioned the standards or if we are in compliance with them. Mrs. Pschirrer noted the auditors work 3-to-4 days in the downstairs office. Mr. Kreissle has witnessed that each year is different. Jodi, Sarah and Rich have worked hard to get water and sewer straightened out. The auditors are very comfortable to work with and answer questions which the former group did not.

Mrs. Pschirrer is pleased with her interactions with them. They look at things that are different and “pop out”. Employee Time Sheets are now similar for each department. They have installed a system in the office to double-check payroll. Police Chief Paquette asked if they are close to getting their vacation time finalized. Mrs. Pschirrer said they are close. Mr. Kreissle has given the Selectboard some information they will look at tonight. Chief Paquette thanked Mr. Kreissle for talking about purchase orders because a lot of them do not understand all the processing of paperwork he has to go through. They now understand the work involved with keeping all the paperwork together. Chief Paquette advised that this Selectboard is turning things into a more professional management system.

Police Department: Police Chief Paquette reported that Officer Devin Prince is finishing up his third week at the Police Academy. Every Friday he stops in at the Police Station to give an update. Last week they sent Detective Bromley and Sgt. Ray Gosetti to a class on fraud investigation as they keep getting more and more cases. Some is from overseas but a lot is local. The new cruiser came in last month. They are waiting for the cruiser that was approved in March at Town Meeting. They have been in touch with lettering companies to get a couple different designs to put on their cars. A “Coffee with A Cop” will be held tomorrow at 9:00 AM at Mascoma Bank. At the recent “Take Back Drug Day” they did not collect as much as they did back in the Fall but Walpole does quite a bit. They are looking at work to be done on the building. There are still problems with the back door so are pushing to get something done. Relative to details – they have not been out much. It is getting more congested going north on Route 12. Chief Paquette has discussed the conditions with the DOT. The contractor expects to have more traffic enforcement as they progress. They had a flagger on the crack sealing project south of Town. Chief Paquette is doing research on traffic control in the construction areas and will continue to discuss this with the DOT.

Hooper Institute: Ms. Becky Whippie said it is getting close to the end of the school year and it is growing season. Through the Cheshire County Conservation District they were able to order three cranberry bushes to plant in the garden near the tunnel at the Walpole Elementary School. She ordered one Dolgo crab-apple which is supposed to be very nice. Mrs. Eloise Clark had been communicating with the community garden folks quite a bit and is promoting the annual fee collection, discussing the water source and hose issues. The people that mow around the Hooper Institute area have taken on the area around the community gardens. Mrs. Clark’s gardens have been harvesting asparagus, spinach, lettuce and pea shoots that are going into the school’s salad bar. From the Primary School garden, the students tasted asparagus, mint, garlic, chives and sweet violet blossoms. They planted kale seeds and radish seeds. They have been watering the plants and seeds. Last spring Ms. Whippie had a gift of some strawberry plants. At the North Walpole School, they are tasting the chives, (garlic and common) and popped strawberry popcorn. They are planting radishes, kale, strawberry popcorn seeds, cabbage, and are watering the soil around rhubarb, cabbage, radishes, and herbs. Water the soil and not the plant. They transplanted sugar maple tree seedlings from the school lawn, sowing herb seeds to take home in a cup - Dill, Thyme, Sage. In the second grade they have been working on farms and animals. The students just started designing their dream farms on paper. The fourth grades did a few nice visits to a sawmill (Woodell & Daughters Forest Products) and saw Morgan horses at Meadow Farm.

Mrs. Pschirrer asked those who did not have time to report today to come up with something special they would like to share with the other departments at the next Staff meeting. Mr. Colburn, Mrs. Downing, Mrs. Fafara, and Mrs. Smith were asked to do this in June. We will meet in June but take July off.

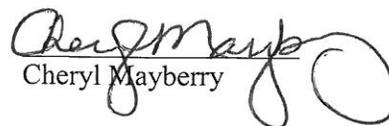
Written reports had been submitted by the Police Department, Selectboard Office, Recreation Department, Walpole Library, and Recycling Center.

Mrs. Pschirrer closed this Staff Meeting at 6:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Regina Borden, Recording Secretary


Peggy L. Pschirrer, Chair


Steven Dalessio


Cheryl Mayberry

(Note: These are unapproved Minutes. Corrections will be found in the Minutes of the May 24, 2018, Selectboard meeting.)